3: Low G-5 (1844 1847) 1848
OC6 Iban OC6

501 [143] the blade being turned in the haft, which is adapted to it either way), their preservation is an object of no small importance, two only being obtained from a large tree with infinite labour, it being very necessary that the planks of the boat, on account of her construction, should all be of the same length as the 'bankong.' These boats, according to their size, carry crews of from thirty to ninety men, and it is computed that, without making any extraordinary exertion, the rivers of Sarebas and the Sakarran branch of the Batang Lupar could send to sea 200 of them, averaging fifty men each. From the nature of these boats, and the slightness of their build, it may easily be imagined that they are not manageable in a seaway, their length causing them to open at the seams: on such occasions, should they not be near enough to the land to run into smooth water, the crew all jump overboard, and hang by the side of the boat: this I have been assured they have done for many successive hours when the squalls, which are usually short in these tranquil seas, have been prolonged, so as to render it necessary. In this situation they take it by turns for one or two to enter the boat, and cook and eat their rice, until the squall is past.

502

502 The Dyaks, on their cruises, are capable of enduring great fatigue, and, if they meet with reverses, have frequently to contend with the pangs of hunger. It is no uncommon thing for the Dyaks to pull for eighteen hours, with only short intervals of rest sufficient to boil and cook their rice, and this, from the beautiful regu-

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3: Low G-5 (1844-1847) 1848
OC6 Iban OC6

larity of their strokes, and their being long accustomed to the practice, does not appear much to fag them; in smooth water, and, without tides, at their regular stroke, they pull about six miles an hour, but when exerting themselves fully can double that rate of speed.

The 'tambangs,' or sharp built sampan boats of Singapore, which are so renowned throughout the East for their speed, are soon lost sight of by the Dyak 'bankongs,' and I should think it probable that no boats in the world could equal them for speed. Each tribe of the Dyaks has peculiar strokes in which it delights, so that in the dark a Sarebas or Sakarran boat could tell whether an approaching one was of Lundu, of the Balows, or a Malay. The Malays also have many methods of paddling, in which the Borneans, or natives of the town of Bruni, excel the inhabitants of the other villages on the coast. On their cruises the Dyaks, who are not, in their sober moments, friends of boisterous mirth, never make use of the cheering and inspiriting songs of the Malayan boatmen: the noise made by each paddle beating time on the gunwale of the boat is to them sufficiently enlivening, and they want no other encouragement to exertion when it is necessary.

When they have met with reverses on an expedition—such as when they lose their boats and are forced to find their way through the jungle, without food, to their homes, perhaps at a great distance—famine is very oppressive to them, though some parts of the woods produce ferns and other edible roots in abun-

5: Roth E-4 (no date) 1892 CC6 Iban OC6

304 and especially if they are regular and symmetrical. They are
[75] particularly proud of their vaccination marks if they show out well, and are equidistant apart. The women often prove the courage and endurance of the youngsters by placing a lighted ball of tinder on the arm, and letting it burn into the skin. The marks thus produced run along the forearm from the waist in a straight line, and are much valued by the young men as so many proofs of their power of endurance.

301 *Ear-holes.*—The rim of the ear is perforated from top to
304 bottom with sometimes as many as twenty holes to support the ear-rings commonly used by the men. The lobe of the ear is also pierced and enlarged to receive a pendant. These organs present a hideous appearance when the ornaments are laid aside, as they reveal in all their deformity the slits and sores, while to add to their uncomeliness the holes are plugged with
[513] bits of wood to keep them open. These ear-rings, especially the heavy shell ones, oblige a man to lie flat on his back when he is going to sleep, it being painful to rest on the sides of the face.

301 Kyans and others wear tiger cat teeth in the tips of their ears.
[171] The points of Dians (a native on the Rejang river) I observed turned upwards, which is not usual, and he said it was an old custom revived by a chief named Hang. The Uma Lesongs wear two such teeth in each ear, the upper one pointing upwards, the lower one downwards; those who are unable to procure the genuine article wear imitation ones carved out of horn or bone.

302 *Teeth filing and staining.*—The upper incisors of both sexes
304 are often filed into a single sharp point; a hole is bored through the centre of each and filled with brass. The enamel is scraped off with a rough stone, and the teeth are rubbed with leaves which stain them black. The lower incisors are ground down to half their natural size and blackened in the same fashion,
● [147] but are neither pointed nor studded with metal. Caries is rare, and the natives seldom suffer from tooth-ache. The teeth are naturally beautifully white and regular, but it is the fashion to disfigure them in this manner as they approach the ages of puberty—boys do it when they begin to care to please the women. They dislike white teeth and consider them hideous. I once saw a Sakarang wearing over his natural teeth a thin brass plate (*lios*) cut to resemble a row of pointed teeth; this was worn over the upper incisors and hooked into the molars. I believe the boy picked up the notion from the Mentuaris or Malohs (Malaus), but I do not imagine it is common with his tribe as I never saw another with it either before or after.

304 *Circumcision.*—Circumcision is practised but it is not

9: Griffith D-5 (1953) 1955 OC6 Iban OC6

costal margin and without any other signs of disease. It was surprising how many livers were enlarged in recruits from Song (mainly Ulu Ketibas). No explanation is offered. 164

Thyroid Enlargement. Goitres were not gross in size but were frequent in occurence. Half the cases were diffuse enlargements and half small adenomata localised to one part of the gland. A large goitre is not to be expected in young men but in the long-houses many of gigantic proportions were seen in old people. The striking fact about the incidence of goitre was that 17 of the 19 cases came from the up-river districts namely Kapit, Song and Lubok Antu. It may also be remarked that these places are beyond the tidal reaches; whereas Simanggang, Engkilili and Kanowit are tidal or very close to tidal reaches. Possibly the availability of salt water fish in the latter places provides sufficient iodine to prevent goitre. Sea salt is available in the long-houses in the interior but it is hardly ever added to the cooking and had to be asked for if required. Perhaps salt being so highly prized is insufficiently used.

Respiratory diseases. The signs of chest disease were usually so minimal as to be impossible to evaluate without X-ray facilities. Of the 8 cases 5 were ascribed to an acute infection and three were thought to be chronic—either tuberculosis or bronchiectasis. It was surprising considering the high rate of pulmonary tuberculosis in the Far East to find so little amongst these men. Perhaps this is because the life the Ibans lead in a long-house is a healthier one as there is far less overcrowding than in urban dwellings.

Tinea. The only cases of this aliment were tinea imbrecator or "kurap". No other skin disease was found.

Eyesight. Since 98% of recruits were illiterate special charts had to be made and standardised. The minimum visual acuity accepted was 6/9 or better in each eye and when using both eyes together at least 6/6. Only one in ten failed to attain this standard. My impression is that this is much better than National Service recruits in the U.K. Another fact that emerges is that nearly half the men who were rejected on the grounds of defective eyesight had associated diseases (such as malaria, otitis media, etc.) sufficient to exclude them in any case. One wonders if their visual acuity would have been normal if these other illnesses had not adversely affected their health. 151 164

Cardiac Murmurs. These were all systolic and were ascribed to functional causes since no cardiac enlargement or other pathology was found. Murmurs were twice as common in the pulmonary area as at the apex. Only two or three were of a harsh nature and may have denoted slight degrees of pulmonary steno- 147 164

147 sis or septal patency. In no case was the exercise tolerance test impaired. It is quite possible that some apical systolic murmurs 164 denoted early mitral valve lisions that might progress to stenosis. The absence of indisputable rheumatic carditis was very noteworthy in view of the fact that otitis media was moderately common and as both are closely related to streptococcal throat infections.

164 I am indebted to Dr. T. Wilson of the Institute for Medical Research, Kuala Lumpur and Capt. J. Bolton R.A.M.C. who carried out blood survey on the Sarawak Rangers when they reached Malaya for the following figures giving the incidence of filariasis.

Second Division

	Number examined.	*Cases of filariasis.*	%
Simanggang	27	9	33
Lubok Antu	80	0	0
Engkilili	10	2	20
Third Division			
Kapit	148	8	5.4
Song	59	0	0
Kanowit	48	5	10

I found two cases of early elephantiasis of the scrotum but was unable to confirm them microscopically.

Quite as interesting as the diseases found were the diseases not found that might have been expected. No leprosy was encountered. Only two men appeared slightly anaemic despite the amount of hookworm infestation that is prevalent in the East. [732] Physical deformities like kyphosis, scoliosis and limb shortening due to fractures were striking by their absence. Only three cases had muscle wasting that might have been attributable to poliomyelitis or encephalitis. No hydroceles or varicoceles were met with, yet in the U.K. about one in twenty males have varicoceles. Only one man had an inguinal hernia—a common condition among English recruits. Veneral disease is hard to diagnose without laboratory aid; one primary chancre was seen but no other manifestation of syphilis. Gonorrhoea (as diagnosed by visible de- [146] posit in the urine) was absent. But V.D. is notoriously easy to conceal. None of the numerous vitamin deficiency diseases were seen.

141 *Height and Weight.* The average heights of recruits at the various towns were as follows:—

		Number
Kanowit	63.9 inches	53
Simanggang	63.4 "	33
Song	63.3	93
Kapit	63.4	205
Engkilili	63.1	15

and the general average 63.45 inches. These figures are all a little too high because of the selection by the recruiting officers and I would estimate the right correction to be a reduction of 0.2 or 0.3 inches.

In 1901 A. C. Haddon F.R.S. did a survey of the physical characteristics of the Ibans in all areas and found the average height to be 62.7 inches. Dr. Haddon examined 56 Ibans and with this comparatively small number it is not justified to compare the two averages through the age distribution was roughly the same.

The average weights were:—Song 126 lbs. Simanggang 119. 5 lbs. Engkilili 115 lbs. In other districts the scales used were found to be inaccurate so invalidating the results. The average weight is 120 lbs for a man of 25 years.

Palangs. A palang is a piece of bone transfixing the glans penis and usually passing through the urethra. Its purpose is to give the wife greater satisfaction in sexual intercourse. Many primitive people use similar devices. At first I kept no records of their prevalence but my recollection is that in Kapit area 30-40% had them or had perforations for them (perhaps having politely removed them for medical examination.). In Song 1 in 46 in Lubok Antu 2 in 105 and Simanggang and Engkilili none at all. Of those that had palang most were made of bone, but some had slivers of rattan curling up at both ends and others were of wood or brass. The incidence of palangs corresponds very well with my impression of the type of men, i.e those from Kapit still retaining their long hair, multiple tattoos and the sirat instead of European shorts and trousers and being altogether less influenced by civilisation.

Another characteristic of the less westernised Ibans was their extreme shyness in exposing their sexual organs whether wearing palangs or not.

During my tour I spent some time living in long-houses and going round hospital wards in the two Divisions and found that the pattern of disease I saw differed little from what I had found examining recruits.

Naturally a casual observer sees nothing of the mortality among infants nor can he assess the mortality and morbidity among the Ibans. But my impression after examining more than 500 of them is that the health of recruits is extremely good and compares very favourably with National Servicemen in England.

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